

MUFORG

BULLETIN

June 1967

COMMENT

Fashionable Explanations

by Paul Hopkins

At one time it was fashionable to put most UFO reports down to the misidentification of planes and weather balloons, and to people seeing optical illusions or in a state of hysteria, of which the latter seems to have lost favour altogether nowadays. Perhaps the pundits found that human beings were more reliable observers than they first thought. Even spots before the eyes seem to have vanished for good. Instead, strange electrical discharges are in fashion.

At last, the mystery of the flying saucer is solved! Take Warminster for instance. Do you remember the strange noises and lights in the sky? Well, one theory I heard was that these lights were caused by the gradual leaking away of electrical charges in the atmosphere down to earth, accompanied by coronal discharges, the noise being a direct result of the discharges, coupled with piezo-electrical effects in the local rock strata.

Now flying saucers themselves may well turn out to be nothing more than lightning balls. (See the April edition of Science Journal, "Focus", page 25.)

I quite accept the fact that strange electrical phenomena, still not clearly understood, can produce glowing balls that move at will and hum gently to themselves. Also I accept the obvious fact that lightning balls are occasionally mistaken for flying saucers. What I do not accept is when a UFO is classed as a manifestation of an electrical phenomenon by a qualified scientist or engineer when, clearly, at the time of the sighting electrical conditions were just not appropriate for the production of the phenomenon in the first place.

It seems to me that some people are getting pretty desperate for a universal UFO explanation. Well, I have some news for them. They will not find a universal scapegoat in electricity.

The Brixham Sighting

The following report, reprinted from the "Sunday Express" of May 21st, 1967, contains what must surely be one of the most fatuous official "explanations" on record, namely "a reflection of car headlights", to explain a sighting which took place at midday.

"A giant cone-shaped object hovered 15,000 ft. above seven coastguards. For more than an hour they watched it through high-

powered glasses. As the object hovered over Brixham, Devon, it slowly revolved, revealing some sort of door in its side.

An aircraft approached, flew round it, and then flew away. Eventually the object vanished behind cloud after climbing to about 20,000 ft. Scores of people along the Devon coast telephoned police stations to ask about the object, sighted at noon on April 28.

The coastguards' report about the object was forwarded within minutes to the Ministry of Defence by the R.A.F. at Plymouth. But last night the Ministry's reaction to the report was puzzling the Brixham coastguards. For the Ministry at first denied that it had even received a report.

Later, a spokesman said: "Further enquiries reveal that we did receive a report, but somehow it was not logged. We can only suggest that the object may have been a reflection of car headlights or some sort of meteorological phenomenon. I cannot comment further."

A senior R.A.F. controller at Plymouth said: "We reported all the details. I cannot tell you where the aircraft came from, and you will have a job to get anyone to admit that one was sent up."

I understand the UFO was also tracked by radar.

At the coastguard station at Berry Head, Brixham, last night chief officer Harry Johnson said: "It's just laughable for anyone to suggest to a body of highly-trained observers that this was the reflection of car headlights. It was midday. The object was obviously made of something very highly polished, and reflected the sunlight almost like a star."

Coastguard Brian Jenkins said: "I was able to make a detailed drawing of it which I showed to an air vice-marshal who called at the station a few days later. His only comment was: 'Most interesting.'"

RECENT NORTH WEST UFO REPORTS

Handforth, Cheshire

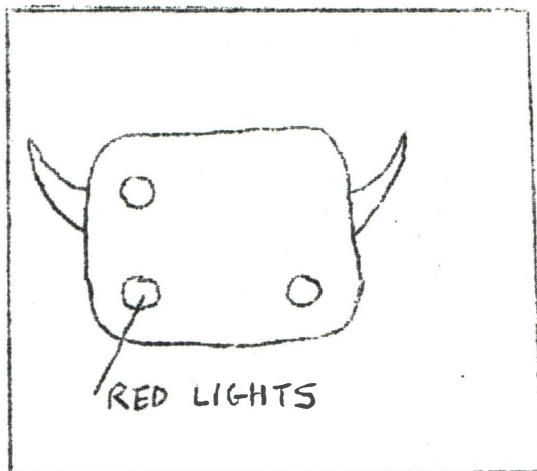
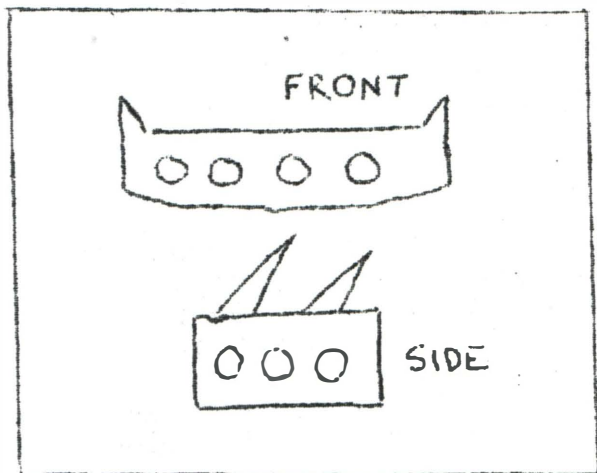
January, 1967 (exact date ~~is~~ not known)

Miss Beatrice Langton saw from her seventh-floor flat one morning an object like a vertical, cigar-shaped cloud. A brown, rectangular object emerged from the cloud-like object, which turned over and appeared to be drawn along by the small object.
(Credit: Mrs Nelstrop, DIGAP and G.E.Gloin, MUFORG)

Stockport, Cheshire

March 14th, 1967. Time 2200-2230 (approx.)

Two witnesses reported seeing a dark object, carrying red lights, about the size of a sixpence at arm's length and making a noise like a jet plane. Its speed was estimated as less than 100 m.p.h. and the elevation was about 45 degrees. Three red lights were seen on the object throughout the observation, which lasted for about five minutes. Each witness made a sketch of the object, copies of which are reproduced below.



(Credit: Mrs Nelstrop, DIGAP)

LANDING REPORTS

DENMARK Sjaellands Odde (Date not known)

The observation was made by two schoolboys "some time ago." The sighting came to light when the boys' mother got in touch with "Rude Skov satellite tracking station," which referred her to the central report office of Scandinavian UFO Information. This organisation sent a representative to Sjaellands Odde to interview the boys. His report was published in the magazine of the organisation "UFO-NYT."

The two boys were playing in front of a large haystack. As it got dark they decided to return home. One of them looked up and noticed a dark grey object in the sky. He thought it was a water-spout and ran home. The other boy was less frightened and he hid in a ditch, from where he continued to observe the object.

The boy said that he saw the object descend, then it quickly slowed down, as three "legs" were lowered through the bottom of it. It looked very much as if it was going to land. When the object was about three feet above the ground the legs were pulled up again and it speeded. The object continued towards the Kattegat (the sea) at a low altitude and when it was over the shore it released what looked like "boxes."

The object then made a turn over the sea and a big box, or hamper, was lowered from the craft. It seemed to be suspended from a sort of rope or cable as thick as an arm. Judging from its movements the cable was flexible. Then eight "persons" came out through a hole in the flying object and climbed down the cable into the box. The boy thought that they were carrying "binoculars or cameras."

Four of the beings waved their hands and smiled at the boy. The boy said that they did not wave their hands in the usual way, but held their palms vertically and made quick horizontal movements.

As the object disappeared the boy heard a sound which he compared to the soft humming from a battery tape recorder.

The boy described the eight persons as being quite small. One of them wore a blue suit and the others wore striped ones. They all wore striped caps. Apart from the person in blue, they all had containers on their backs from which tubes led to their mouths. On their shoulders they had ~~xxxx~~ what looked like electric torches, with lights at both ends.

(Source: "Holbaek Amts Venstreblad", April 15th, 1967.

Credit: "Report from Denmark", Vol.1, No.3, published by NORREBRO UFO KREDS.)

DENMARK Holbak (Date not given)

A farmer from the neighbourhood of Holbak reported a strange experience he had late one night. He kept quiet about it for some time because he was afraid of ridicule.

The farmer said, "I was looking out over the fields when I suddenly saw a strange light. It was not an ordinary light, but artificial and lilac-coloured.

"I was quite staggered. People are not usually at that place at night. Then I realised that something was happening and I went over to it. But midway I suddenly noticed an object. In the darkness it was difficult to see what it looked like."

The farmer said that the light came from some windows which were almost oval in shape. He could see that there was a dome on the object because he faintly saw the outline of something below. He also saw that something seemed to move behind the windows.

He was so impressed by the experience that he at once went home and went to bed. The next day he went down to the field and found a mysterious substance which he could not describe exactly.

He said that it looked like cotton-wool, but it had a colour he had never seen before. It was much, much finer than cotton. He could hardly feel it when he took it in his hands. He described the colour as "strong." He gathered a handful and placed it under a stone. The substance disappeared little by little over a period of three days.

In the place where he had seen the object, he discovered that the grass was pressed down. He also noticed that the lowest wire on some nearby pylons had been pulled down and dragged about 60 ft. (Source: "Holbak Amts Venstreblad," May 11th, 1967. Credit: "Report from Denmark", Vol.1, No.3.)

Other UFO Reports

Vancouver, Canada. December 29th, 1966 night

Five members of a Canadian Pacific Airlines flight reported that they saw a UFO during a regular flight from Lima, Peru, to Mexico City. The Captain, Robert Millbank, of Burnaby, B.C., said he saw two beams of light during the flight and the other members of the crew gathered to watch.

"It was getting bigger all the time, and at one point shot out a trail of sparks like a rocket. Then it seemed to be getting closer and we could see a string of lights between the two lights that were white. It then levelled off at our wing tip and, in the full moon, we could see a shape between the two lights which appeared thicker in the middle." He said the object remained a couple of minutes then disappeared behind the big passenger plane.

(Credit: Saucers, Space and Science, Canada --- IUFOB)

(Investigation: News media)

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, U.S.A. May 11th, 1967 11.30 p.m.

Nine witnesses reported sighting an "object that looked very much like a 'flying cigar'" over the northwestern suburbs of this city. The object was described as being "at least 70 ft. long," although the object was quite high when spotted. Upon questioning, all witnesses said the object was high, but that "you could tell it was huge." Investigation turned up the fact that a large dirigible had been in the area that afternoon, doing aerial advertisements in connection with an upcoming Charity Ball, but that the aircraft had left the city at 4.0 p.m. that same afternoon. The physical descriptions given by the witnesses do not match with the possibility that the objects were one and the same. The object sighted was, "cigar shaped with a very bright, orange glow about it, and it seemed to emit a low humming noise." Five of those persons reporting said they were first attracted to the object by the noise. All agreed that the object was emitting sparks from the 'rear' of the craft. NOTE: All witnesses were interviewed individually -- none knew of any other reports of the object.

(Credit: IUFOB. Investigation: IUFOB)

Lier, Belgium April 10th, 1967 8.57 p.m.

The sighting was made by a barber and his wife and daughter at Lier. The daughter drew attention to the object and the family watched it through a window. An oval-shaped object, glowing red, was hovering near the moon. The daughter said that the object had been moving up and down when she first saw it. The family went into the garden to get a better look. Then they saw two smaller objects coming from the upper part of the big one. These objects were one sixth the size of the large one and the same colour. At the beginning of the observation the large object was at an altitude of 45° in a SW direction. The two smaller UFOs left the "mother ship" in that position and flew to the east, via the north. Their paths diverged and they flew at some distance from one another. After moving round to the east, they came together and turned back towards the large object, which had moved round to the north. The two small objects made a triangular formation with the large one, then they disappeared suddenly. The observation had lasted for 23 minutes.

When the objects changed speed or made turns, their colour changed from red to blue.

(This is a condensed version of a detailed report sent by the investigator, Mr Edgar Simons, Chairman, Belgian Interplanetary Study Circle, Maasfortbaan 187, LIER, Belgium.)

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REPORT ON A VISIT TO WARMINSTER BY JOHN HARNEY AND ALAN W. SHARP
May 27th - 29th, 1967

We arrived in Warminster on the Saturday afternoon (May 27th) and soon discovered that there were other ufologists staying there that weekend, including Nigel Stephenson, Ken Rogers, Jimmy Goddard and a party of NICAP/GB members.

That afternoon we learned that the NICAP/GB party had claimed to have sighted two, reddish cigar-shaped objects the previous night from a vantage point on Battlesbury Hill. This sighting took place, we were given to understand, in fulfilment of a prediction obtained during a sort of table-turning session. As we were not present at these events and have no further details at the time of writing, we have no comments to make on them.

During the Saturday afternoon and evening there was talk of a general expectation that "something big was going to happen" that night. We did not share this feeling, so the reason for it remains obscure to us.

Arthur Shuttlewood and his friend, Bob Strong, had organised a skywatch for the Saturday night. Apparently their intention was to take advantage of the Army ranges being open that weekend and to make an excursion to the deserted village of Imber. We joined the convoy in Warminster at the appointed time and soon perceived that some sort of argument was going on. It was not made clear to us just what the trouble was, but it seemed that Arthur Shuttlewood or Bob Strong thought that there were too many people in the convoy and, presumably, it was thought that the UFOs would be put off by the presence of a relatively large number of skywatchers concentrated in one group.

The leading cars in the convoy drove off unexpectedly and were soon lost to view, so the rest of us decided to drive up Cradle Hill, which was near at hand and as good a place as any for observing UFOs, by all accounts. Arrived at the top of Cradle Hill we found that the rest of the party had gone there after all. A great argument was taking place: apparently some proposed to stay at Cradle Hill and others wanted to go to Imber, and among those who wanted to go to Imber there was disagreement over which route to take. Also, various wild rumours were being bandied about, one of them being that "the Army would shoot Shuttlewood if he drove on to the ranges." The whole business was very confusing and we would hesitate to pin the responsibility for this muddle on to any particular person or persons.

Eventually some of us left Cradle Hill and drove up to the ranges. When we reached the guardhouse, Shuttlewood and his friends were already there, having taken a short cut. We then followed some cars across the range to Imber and drew up about half a mile beyond the village to commence skywatching. The sky was rather cloudy and only a few stars were visible. Nothing unusual was to be seen for a time until one of us noticed a flash of lightning on the horizon in an easterly direction. The flashes continued to the east and south east. No thunder was heard, so the storms must have been a long way away.

The other cars went away, one by one, so we finally returned to the guardhouse to see if we could learn if Mr Shuttlewood was having any luck. There were several cars parked there when we arrived and we were told that Shuttlewood had got quite excited when the lightning commenced and said that it was definitely not lightning, but a manifestation of the "Thing." He had then driven off into the night, hoping to view it at closer quarters.

After some time Shuttlewood's car returned and he was soon giving the most extraordinary descriptions of what, to us, was merely lightning(1) produced by distant thunderstorms. His car then drove off. We remained a while longer and left at about 1.30 a.m., when it began to rain.

Shuttlewood's reactions to the display of lightning did nothing to diminish our scepticism concerning many of the UFOs allegedly seen during Warminster skywatches. If ordinary lightning can be transformed, when seen with the "eye of faith," into something

out of this world, one might perhaps be forgiven for supposing that other phenomena, both natural and artificial, are regularly being misinterpreted in similar fashion during such skywatches.

However, when this was suggested, in a review of Mr Shuttlewood's lecture at last year's BUFORA Northern Conference(2), great indignation was aroused. The opinions expressed in that review were based on information received from people with experience of skywatching at Warminster. For example, one report received from a reliable source(3) was an observation of a certain, very well-known ufologist pointing at a star and calling it "a definite UFO."

That weekend there was some discussion about a report by Arthur Shuttlewood and Bob Strong of a landing at Starr Hill. An account of this alleged incident had been published in the latest issue of SUFOA(4). We learned that since this incident, different groups of enthusiasts had been to Starr Hill and had investigated a house from which "strange" lights were said to emanate. Some said the house was deserted and some said it was not. So, on the Sunday (May 28th), Alan Sharp visited the place in question and found it to consist of a settlement of several farms and about a dozen workers' houses. It was discovered that the "deserted" house was merely not regularly lived in by the owner, who has a place elsewhere, but employees keep an eye on the premises and he pays visits. The rest of the dwellings in the vicinity are occupied.

The owner of the nearest farm to the east of the "deserted" house was interviewed and he said that he had never observed anything odd in the vicinity. He regarded the stories of strange lights, etc., with tolerant amusement and seemed to regard the Army as the source of genuine "unknown" observations.

Various startling UFO incidents are said to have happened in the vicinity of a copse known as Colloway Clump. We visited this area and Alan Sharp enquired at New Farm, only a few hundred yards away from the Clump and in full view of it. The farmer and his son said that they had never seen anything unusual in the vicinity of the copse and suggested that some well-known locals were overworking their powers of imagination. They also said that of all the people who had been poking around in the vicinity, not one had approached the farm for permission to investigate.

A visit was made to one of the houses where strange noises (the "Warminster Sound") have been heard. The occupants were interviewed and samples were taken from the garden and the gutters(5). By all accounts, these reports of strange noises appear to be genuine. Some people have attempted to explain them away as being due to the activities of helicopters, but this theory is unconvincing in view of the descriptions given. On the other hand, it would seem to be somewhat rash to accept the popular notion that the noises are due to the activities of alien space craft before other possibilities, such as atmospheric electrical phenomena of an unusual nature (see "Comment", front page), have been adequately explored.

On Sunday evening we learned that Mr Shuttlewood claimed to have had a "contact" that afternoon. Apparently, one of the "Aenstrians" telephoned him and Shuttlewood told him something to the effect that he would have to see him in the flesh if he was to be absolutely certain that the "aenstrians" were not just hoaxers and slammed the phone down. A few minutes later there was a knock at the door and a spaceman was duly admitted. This being had a very high forehead and blue lips and had one or two things to say, including the prediction that a third world war would break out shortly. The apparition was also seen by other members of Shuttlewood's family.

Earlier in the day, Alan Sharp had been treated to a demonstration, by a sceptical Warninster resident, of the technique of making local calls from a coin-box phone without putting any money in the box. The reason for this demonstration was Shuttlewood's statement that the space people claimed to telephone him from a public box, but he never heard any money going in(6). However, Mr Shuttlewood's latest claim would seem to dispose of the necessity of studying the technicalities of the telephone system. At this stage there is no useful comment we can make on the new contact claim;

Later that Sunday evening we went skywatching on Cradle Hill, accompanied by Ken Rogers and Nigel Stephenson. It was a clear night and we saw one aircraft, four meteors and a satellite, but no UFOs.

To sum up, then, the strange noises which originally drew attention to Warminster were almost certainly genuine observations. Also, it would appear that there have been other observations in the area which are worthy of further investigation. However, there can be little doubt that the majority of UFO reports from Warminster are spurious. Our own experiences and a careful reading of published reports indicate that many ufologists seem to leave their critical faculties at home when they go to Warminster.

Notes and References

1. According to the Daily Weather Report of the British Meteorological Office (No. 38538, May 28th, 1967), lightning, but no thunder, was reported during the period 2100-0300 GMT on the night of May 27th-28th at Boscombe Down. A glance at the midnight (GMT) reports from other stations revealed that thunderstorms had been widespread in the Southern half of the British Isles that evening.
2. "Warminster's Contactee," MUFORG Bulletin, October, 1966.
3. Private communication to the editor.
4. Barry W. Woodgate, "Return to Warminster," SUFOA, March/April, 1967.
5. We hope to publish more about these observations in a future issue of the Bulletin.
6. Arthur Shuttlewood, "The Warminster Mystery," page 187.

RECENT BOOKS

The following books will be reviewed in the next issue of the Bulletin:

THE WARMINSTER MYSTERY by Arthur Shuttlewood, Neville Spearman, 25/-.

THE SCORITON MYSTERY by Eileen Buckle, Neville Spearman, 30/-

THE INTERRUPTED JOURNEY by John G. Fuller, The Dial Press, New York, 5.95 dollars.

UFOs FOR THE MILLIONS by Howard V. Chambers, Sherbourne Press Inc., Los Angeles, Calif.

LATEST NORTH WEST UFO REPORTS

St Helens, Lancs. May 8th, 1967 00.45 BST

The witness was on night duty at a local glass works, when he, together with seven other witnesses, sighted a UFO. It was described as a cigar-shaped object, glowing with an orange colour. The apparent size of the object was compared to that of a penny at arm's length. A small object with a light on top dropped from the main object and re-entered at the top. The object then flew off rapidly on a zig-zag course.

The witness was interviewed by MUFORG member G.T. Woods, after he had read an account of the sighting in the "St Helens Reporter." Arrangements are being made to carry out further investigations of this report and we hope to publish fuller details in due course.

Bootle, Lancs. June 17th, 1967 23.20 BST

Stephen Davies (Assistant Secretary, MUFORG) was observing the Moon through a 3 inch, refractor, using a power of 200X, when a domed, saucer-shaped object crossed his field of view. The dome was on top, as seen through the telescope, ~~xxx~~ (which gives an inverted image). The object was visible for from 2 to 3 seconds. It had no lights on it and was seen only against the background of the sunlit part of the Moon. The sky was cloudless at the time of the observation.

M U F O R G N E W S

Satellites and Space Travel At the meeting held on June 28th, Mr Stephen Davies gave an interesting talk on the progress of space exploration by means of manned and unmanned spacecraft and satellites. He made a good point when he compared present day progress with the pessimistic forecasts made by experts in the days before the first spacecraft were launched.

Future Meetings Meetings are held at 2, Alfred Place, (off Park Road) Dingle, Liverpool, 8, commencing at 8.0 p.m. Next meetings are -- Wednesday, July 12th (General Meeting) and Wednesday, July 26th, (Informal Meeting).

UFO SIGHTINGS Will any members who hear of local U O reports please send them to me as soon as possible (M Address and telephone No. below), so that they can be passed on quickly to other members and to the BUFORA Research Co-ordinator, UFOLOG, etc. If I do not already have your telephone number, please let me know it, so that you can be immediately informed of any local sightings.-- Ed.

National Skywatch Weather conditions on Merseyside were somewhat unfavourable for skywatching on June 24th (National Skywatch Day). Nevertheless, several members took part. We understand that reports were negative, but any members who took part should send in reports (if they have not already done so), giving details of weather conditions etc., to-- Mr E.A.Hatvany, BUFORA Projects Officer, 19 Richmond Avenue, East Bedfont, Middlesex.

BUFORA NORTHERN CONFERENCE -- The conference will take place on Saturday, November 4th, 1967, at the Central Hall, Renshaw Street, Liverpool, 1.

Conference Co-ordinator:- R.D.Hughes, 86 Trouville Road, Liverpool, 4.

M U F O R G B u l l e t i n

EDITOR John Harney, 53 Woodyear Road, Bromborough, Wirral, Cheshire, England. Telephone EASTham 2146.

CONTRIBUTIONS Articles, reviews, comments, press cuttings welcome. When writing letters to the editor, please indicate if they are intended for publication. Contributions published in this Bulletin are the responsibility of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of MUFORG.

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EXCHANGES & DISTRIBUTION This publication is sent to MUFORG members and to other UFO organisations which exchange publications and/or information.

For economy reasons, this publication must be limited to a small number of copies and several new exchange offers have recently been received. We, therefore, cannot afford to send the Bulletin to organisations or publications we never hear from. Accordingly the following will be deleted from the mailing list unless we hear from them:- U.S.A. NICAP, APRO, S.A.U.C.E.R.S., UFO MAGAZINE; FRANCE "Lumières dans la Nuit."

June 30th, 1967